

Kentucky Teacher

December 2009 - January 2010

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov



LARRY A. RYLE HIGH

Meet the 2010 Kentucky Teacher of the Year

Page 6

What's Inside

4 Board begins SB 1 implementation

5 Calloway preschool builds strong learning foundation

7 Crocker brings enthusiasm, idealism into his classroom

8 Dropout prevention an 'individual' endeavor

10 East Heights honored as a 2009 Blue Ribbon School

11 Student achievement hinges on teachers being 'in the know'

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Commissioner of Education
TERRY HOLLIDAY

Director, Division of Communications
LISA GROSS

Editor
STEPHANIE SIRIA

Staff Writers
SUSAN RIDDELL
MATTHEW TUNGATE

Graphic Designer
JOHN BOONE

Photographer
AMY WALLOT

Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to *Kentucky Teacher*, 612 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteacher@education.ky.gov.

www.education.ky.gov

The Kentucky Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. Alternate formats of this publication are available upon request.

Printed with state funds by LexPress,
Lexington, Ky., on recycled paper
ISSN 1526-3584

Talk to the Experts ...

About Certification

Education Professional
Standards Board
100 Airport Road, 3rd Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: (502) 564-4606
Fax: (502) 564-7080
Toll Free: (888) 598-7667
www.kyepsb.net

About Retirement

Kentucky Teachers'
Retirement System
479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601-3868
Phone: (502) 848-8500
Fax: (502) 573-0199
Toll Free: (800) 618-1687
<http://ktrs.ky.gov>

Front cover: Butch Hamm stands outside the doors of Larry A. Ryle High School (Boone County). Hamm is a 24-year teaching veteran who has taught English and communication courses for four years. Photo by Amy Wallot



Photo by Amy Wallot

Shaving station

Teaching assistant Queisha Girton helps Head Start student Conner Calhoun at the shaving station during "Pioneer Day" at Hite Elementary School (Jefferson County). The event featured American Revolution and Civil War re-enactors, Native American dancers, and pioneer games and music. This was the seventh history event held at the school and emphasized the life of Abraham Lincoln in commemoration of his 200th birthday in 2009.

Second preschool cited for excellence

Hager Preschool (Owensboro Independent) has been designated as a Kentucky Early Childhood Center of Excellence by the Kentucky Department of Education. This award follows the school's recognition last school year as an Early Childhood Center of Quality, the first step in attaining Center of Excellence status. See page 5 for more about Kentucky's first Early Childhood Center of Excellence.

The Early Childhood Centers of Quality designation was developed in 2008 as a response to recommendations for statewide services to deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired students. Centers that achieve this distinction will serve as models of practice for other districts in the region through on-site consultation, mentoring and presentations at state, regional and national levels.

Successful applicants for the designation included the following components:

- state-funded preschool program located in a stand-alone facility with an on-site administrator
- on-site services provided to children with visual and hearing impairments
- services provided within regular early childhood classrooms
- national or regional early childhood accreditation Kentucky Early Childhood Standards and Parent Guides implemented
- ongoing assessment data used in classroom instructional planning
- professional development individualized for the staff.

Additional criteria for Centers of Excellence, implemented during the 2009 school year, include:

- Center of Quality designation
- use of the *Building A Strong Foundation* series, which includes preschool standards, parent guides, continuous assessment tools and Quality Self Study
- a minimum, combined average center score of 6.0 on the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (ECERS-R) and meeting all substantial portion of the day indicators (1/3 of preschool day consists of child-initiated learning/activities)
- IECE certification held by a majority of teachers
- on-site review visit

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=COE

24 Selected as Teacher Achievement Award winners

The Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc. selected 24 outstanding Kentucky educators as recipients of the 2010 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards. See page 6 for more about Kentucky's 2010 Teacher Achievement Award winners.

Judging was conducted by a blue-ribbon panel of veteran educators, many of whom have more than 30 years of teaching experience.

The winning teachers, listed by school district, are:

- **Berea Independent** – Sally F. Robinson, Berea Community High
- **Boone County** – Cherra L. Caldwell, Larry A. Ryle High
- **Boone County** – Durell Hamm, Larry A. Ryle High
- **Boone County** – Lisa J. Lokesak, New Haven Elementary
- **Bourbon County** – Scott Cahill, Bourbon County Middle
- **Bullitt County** – Stephanie E. Carver, Mt. Washington Middle
- **Clark County** – Jan V. Horn, Shearer Elementary
- **Corbin Independent** – Melissa R. Evans, Corbin Middle
- **Elizabethtown Independent** – Holly L. Walker, Elizabethtown High
- **Elliott County** – Anita B. Laney, Elliott County High
- **Graves County** – Phyllis J. Ray, Central Elementary
- **Jefferson County** – Ronda K. Fields, Ballard High
- **Jefferson County** – Valerie S. Rueger, Ramsey Middle
- **Jefferson County** – Kimberly Slusher, Dunn Elementary
- **Letcher County** – Stacy Isaac, Martha Jane Potter Elementary
- **Lincoln County** – James C. Carrier, McKinney Elementary
- **Mercer County** – Steve Goggin, Mercer County Senior High
- **McCracken County** – Jennifer Lacey, Heath Middle
- **Monticello Independent** – Jennifer Chaplin, Monticello High
- **Pendleton County** – Kerry S. Conrad, Phillip A. Sharp Middle
- **Rockcastle County** – Melissa C. Singleton, Rockcastle County Middle
- **Shelby County** – Artavia M. Acklin, Clear Creek Elementary
- **Simpson County** – Josh Tucker, Franklin-Simpson Middle
- **Warren County** – Jennifer H. Clark, Cumberland Trace Elementary

MORE INFO...

Donna Melton, donna.melton@education.ky.gov, (502) 564-1479

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Terry Holliday, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education

New year brings challenging state budget, unprecedented opportunity

Recently, the Kentucky Board of Education reviewed the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) budget proposal for the 2010 General Assembly.

During these difficult budget times, it is apparent that we will not be able to continue doing everything we previously have done at KDE. As a result, I am asking staff to look closely at revising our mission statement and to review the work they are doing to ensure we are aligning the work and the budget to the key strategic goals of high student performance, high-quality teachers and administrators, supportive environments, and high-performing schools and districts.

As a result, we will be abandoning some work that we have done in the past due to budget constraints and decisions made based on priorities. The simple fact is that we have about 60 percent of the staff we had in the '90s, and we have seen significant budget reductions in operations. As we make these decisions, we are working closely with key partners throughout the state to ensure we do not abandon important support for existing programs.

While KDE continues to work toward meeting its goals during lean economic conditions, school districts also have faced state budget cuts and continue to balance them against the numerous obligations to their students, teachers and communities. They also have to prepare for the future when federal dollars may not be as available.

It has been a difficult period up to this point. Between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009, school districts saw significant reductions in Flexible Focus dollars, which provide funds for extended school services, preschool, professional development, textbooks and safe schools. In addition to cuts made through the enacted budget, there was a statewide 2 percent cut late in the fiscal year that impacted school districts. In July, just as the new fiscal year was beginning, KDE was asked to prepare an additional 4 percent budget reduction. The bottom line to school districts is that Flex Focus dollars have been reduced by 36 percent on average statewide.



Holliday

The State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, available through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, were used to maintain SEEK funding through June 30, 2011. However, the concern for everyone is that those funds will not be available after that date. The General Assembly and Gov. Steve Beshear will be dealing with this issue as they develop the biennial budget for FY11 and FY12.

The proposals the Kentucky Board of Education will submit to the legislature are directly connected to the department's goals. Items on the legislative agenda include:

- expanding pre-K learning opportunities to 200 percent of poverty level for 4-year-olds
- raising the compulsory school age to 17 in 2010-11 and 18 in 2011-12.
- addressing possible statutory changes to achieve improvement in student learning through classroom teaching; fairly and robustly assess teacher strengths and needs with multiple measures; and provide the teacher, school and district with the resources for improvement

These initiatives meet a common goal – that every child leaves the public school system in Kentucky proficient and prepared for success. That goal can only be realized through collaborative efforts from school councils, administrators, teachers, parents and students. But the simple truth is we are working with fewer funds and less personnel at both state and local levels.

We are in a difficult budget period for the next two years, and we should not expect new dollars for new initiatives. However, we should not let funding be a stumbling block.

The department's goal is to minimize the impact in the classroom from these challenges. At KDE, we are looking carefully at all programs to ensure they are effective and efficient. We also are looking at outside funding through competitive programs such

as Race to the Top and money from foundations. With success at securing some of the federal money, we will have both the opportunity and the means to shift the focus of public education in Kentucky from testing to improving student learning.

While there are signs that the national economic picture is improving, it will take a while for that to be reflected in state revenues. However, prudent planners will continue to work to ensure expenditures are focused on the core mission of schools, which is learning. Your districts are being fiscally responsible in tight times, so you should expect no less from us at the department.

You can keep track of education legislation, as well as meetings of the legislative education subcommittees and committees. Everything is posted and updated daily on the Legislative Research Commission's Web site at www.lrc.ky.gov. The Web site provides information on how you can reach your legislator by postal mail, e-mail or toll-free phone call.

I recognize the fact that you face significant challenges and often have to make difficult decisions, especially in these tight budget times. I appreciate that and applaud you for your dedication and professionalism. The focus for everyone is and must remain the students. They are the ones we ultimately serve, and they deserve nothing less.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Holliday at terry.holliday@education.ky.gov.)

Follow Terry Holliday
on

twitter

<http://twitter.com/kycommissioner>

Read Doc H's blog at

<http://kyedcommissioner.blogspot.com>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Slinky science

Middle school science teacher Roddy Harrison uses a Slinky during an experiment in his class at the Williamsburg School (Williamsburg Independent). The students were learning about transverse and longitudinal waves.

Board begins SB 1 implementation

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

The Kentucky Board of Education laid the groundwork for implementing Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) during its meeting in December.

The board's actions included eliminating the *Core Content for Assessment* document, renaming the *Program of Studies*, allowing the Kentucky Department of Education to require schools to use uniform academic course codes and discussing a statewide evaluation system to measure teacher and administrator effectiveness that would be based on student achievement, working conditions and differentiated compensation.

SB 1 ended the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) and required the Department of Education to establish new, clearer curriculum standards that are better aligned for college readiness and global competition.

Kentucky is participating in a national effort to adopt common core standards in mathematics, English/language arts and possibly science.

Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday said he believes Kentucky will be the first state of the 49 participants to adopt the common core standards. He said he expects the mathematics standards to be released to the public by Jan. 31, 2010.

SB 1 requires reading and mathematics standards to be revised by Dec. 15, 2010.

To prepare for the changes to the standards, the board discussed changing the name of Kentucky's *Program of Studies* to Kentucky's *Core Academic Standards*. The board will have to approve the change at its February meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Larry Stinson said adopting the fewer, higher standards will allow the Department of Education to stop producing the *Core Content for Assessment* document, which represented the content that would be

tested as part of the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT).

He suggested board members think of curriculum as a Venn diagram. "You have a stated curriculum, you have a taught curriculum, and you have a tested curriculum," Stinson said. "To the extent that you can get those three to come together and look like they're one big circle, the better off you're going to be."

Holliday said a group of teachers have reviewed the standards and will do an online survey between the final draft and the final standards. Once the standards are adopted, teachers will need to be trained to use them. Holliday said the state's Race to the Top application includes an online tool to provide resources to teachers as early as the 2010-11 school year. However, students will not be assessed on the new standards until the 2011-12 school year.

"So teachers, don't panic. This isn't going to happen to you next fall," he said.

SB 1 also called for a new accountability system that tracks individual student progress based on the new standards by 2012. Until then, schools are operating under an interim assessment system, which the board approved at its meeting.

Because CATS is no longer Kentucky's assessment system, the accountability index, academic index and growth charts no longer exist. Until a permanent assessment system is developed for the 2011-12 school year, schools will be held accountable under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Students will continue to take the KCCT in reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing on demand, and the results in mathematics and reading will determine whether schools and districts have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Elementary and middle schools will use their KCCT results in science, social studies and writing on

demand scores as part of their AYP calculations. High schools use graduation rate as part of their AYP calculations, and the state board agreed to adopt an Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate to provide graduation data during the interim assessment period.

The permanent accountability system called for in SB 1 must provide criterion-based and norm-referenced results so results can be compared to state and national benchmarks. However, end-of-course assessments may be used in lieu of criterion-referenced tests, and board members agreed to allow the Department of Education to use end-of-course assessments for the future high school assessment program.

Stinson said teachers could use the end-of-course assessments to ensure more student accountability – a desire teachers have held since state accountability began.

"They could use it as their final exam that they use for grading purposes if they so chose," he said.

However, the department must still decide which subjects would be appropriate for end-of-course tests. Materials provided to the board suggested Algebra I, geometry and Algebra II; English 1-4; biology, chemistry and physics; and U.S. History and government would be the most likely candidates.

The results on those tests, which would be common throughout the state, would be one factor in deciding if schools are making progress, Stinson said.

Holliday said North Carolina, where he worked before coming to Kentucky, required five end-of-course tests, and students could not receive a diploma without passing them.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Bob Hudson, CEO of the Pattie A. Clay Regional Medical Center in Richmond, receives the ninth annual Joseph W. Kelly Award from Kentucky Board of Education Chairman Joe Bothers. The award was announced during the Kentucky Board of Education's meeting Dec. 9 in Frankfort.

Stinson said details such as that have not been worked out yet. "The details are where it starts to get difficult," he told the board.

The board also directed department staff to work with appropriate stakeholders to require using Uniform Academic Course Codes. The codes will help ensure that students taking classes with the same name are learning the same information, as well as providing more uses for student data.

Board member Dorie Combs asked if districts will be able to offer special courses.

"We don't want to stifle that creativity, but we do want some standardization," Stinson answered.

Holliday said the change would allow educators to correlate an Algebra I course with students' ACT results and even connect those results to teacher-preparation programs.

The new common core standards make it essential that all courses of the same name address the same content, he said.

"We're not going to be telling teachers how to teach, but we are going to tell them what they need to be teaching," he said.

That improved data could be important as the board endorsed the department's effort to develop a statewide common evaluation system that will link teacher and administrator effectiveness to:

- student achievement
- working conditions

- differentiated compensation

Stinson said each district currently decides its own criteria and develops its own evaluation instruments.

"We're suggesting it's time to have a statewide approach," he said.

Board members were enthusiastic about the idea. "Without this piece, we will not be successful," Board Chair Joe Brothers said.

The board also took the following actions:

- approved its legislative action plan, which includes extending pre-kindergarten to more students; making dropout prevention grants more flexible; raising the compulsory school age to 18 by 2011-12; and adding chronic, low student academic performance as a cause for removal of a superintendent or school board member
- agreed to cut board costs by eliminating group dinners, switching to box lunches and not reimbursing travel costs
- presented Reading First Coordinator Linda Holbrook the first Kevin M. Noland Award. See page 16 for more about Holbrook and the Kevin Noland Award.

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=KBOE

Calloway preschool builds strong learning foundation

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

They have SMART boards, a curriculum map and their very own principal.

But these school children are not high school, middle school or even elementary school students.

These are the preschool students at the Calloway County Preschool.

The roughly 200 3- and 4-year-olds are getting high-quality preparation for kindergarten from a facility and faculty that push the envelope on young learning.

"We believe we are providing a strong foundation for learning that will continue to make an impact throughout their educational career," Principal Jason Scarbrough said.

The Calloway County Preschool was recently honored as Kentucky's first Early Childhood Center of Excellence by the Kentucky Department of Education. To earn this recognition, centers must have a state-funded preschool program housed in a stand-alone facility with an on-site administrator as well as on-site services provided for visually and hearing-impaired students.

The preschool is located in a separate building on the same campus as the district's middle and high schools. It was built in 1994, and according to Scarbrough, has since become a model school for other districts.

It strives to give youngsters a comprehensive program and incorporates parents and the com-

munity into its resources. The center's main goals are to integrate education, health, social services and parent involvement into the lives of each child.

Teacher Julie Wallace said the preschool is successful for several reasons.

"We are fortunate to be located in our own building with an excellent principal and support staff," Wallace said. "We have a wrap-around daycare program located in our building as well as family resource staff and Head Start staff. Most of the teachers have been teaching together for several years, which in my opinion helps our program run smoothly. The teachers meet monthly to discuss upcoming events, plan schoolwide activities and share ideas. The level of collaboration and teamwork by the teachers and staff members contributes greatly to our success."

Along with teachers and teaching assistants, Scarbrough said the school is staffed with a speech pathologist and an occupational therapist, and the school is a blended program with Head Start.

"By having these resources available to our families, we are able to provide true wraparound services to our students and families."

Scarbrough cites the preschool's curriculum map as a strong example of how his staff works well together.

"I merely made a suggestion to the staff about the benefits of developing a map, and before the month was over, the teachers had gotten together and made a draft,"

the state-funded preschool program, according to the Kentucky Department of Education Preschool Consultant Annie Rooney French. Here's her take on the three honorees:

- At **Family and Children's Place** (Jefferson County), **Christine Clark** exemplifies high-quality interactions between teachers and students by modeling empathetic behavior with the children among staff. Clark has a clear intentional approach to learning. Students are



Photo by Amy Wallot

Preschool teacher Julie Wallace helps Sydney Miller read a book at Calloway County Preschool. The preschool, which was built in 1994, was selected as the first Early Childhood Center of Excellence by the Kentucky Department of Education in 2009.

he said. "It has been revised a few times since, most recently with the revised Early Childhood Standards.

"We are very proud of our curriculum map that helps us ensure that we are teaching each early childhood standard to every student," Scarbrough added. "We also use the (Kentucky Early Childhood) Quality Self Study and the (Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous) Assessment Guide every year. We utilize a school improvement plan. Even though the preschool program is not required to do so, we have found it to be very useful in our planning year to year."

Like all teachers at the preschool, Wallace's main goal is to provide a meaningful learning environment and activities that keep the students actively involved.

"Recently our students have learned about the five senses," Wallace said. "We have incorporated several cooking activities such as making pudding, popcorn and modeling dough. Some of the lessons we have worked on include providing sweet, salty and sour foods for our students to taste while learning about the sense of taste. We charted each student's favorite taste, and then we counted to see which taste had more or less. Some of the students were surprised to learn they actually liked some of the food after they tasted it.

"We also played a game with the students while learning about the sense of sight, where we chose one child to hide under a blanket while the other students took turns guessing who was missing,"

Wallace added. "The students loved this activity. The classroom was full of laughter while playing – such a wonderful sound."

All curricula at the school is geared toward the main job of the preschool – getting students prepared for kindergarten.

"We collaborate with the kindergarten teachers at all three elementary schools in Calloway County to help make transitioning to kindergarten a success for our students," Wallace said. "We take field trips to each elementary school in the district so the students can visit the school that they will be attending in the fall. Our students are able to meet the teachers and staff members, tour the building and participate in kindergarten activities. All of the preschool teachers and assistants visit the kindergarten classrooms in the fall on the first two days of kindergarten to help make the transition easier for our students"

Scarbrough agreed.

"We focus on transition in all aspects of the preschool program," Scarbrough said. "We understand our purpose is to prepare our students for kindergarten. We use data to help us plan instruction, to better serve our students. All staff here at the preschool respond well to setting high standards and have achieved every goal we have ever set."

MORE INFO...

www.calloway.k12.ky.us

Jason Scarbrough, jason.scarbrough@calloway.kyschools.us, (270) 762-7412

2009 Preschool Classrooms of Excellence teachers

Schools that do not have a designated preschool center can apply for recognition as a Classroom of Excellence. This year, three Kentucky preschools earned this honor. The three new Preschool Classrooms of Excellence teachers demonstrate the best of the best in teaching and learning in

engaged in talking about their writing and art. Clark uses an integrative "project approach" for learning, which is evident throughout the classrooms. She has even transformed her lesson plan to a Web format to demonstrate the connections between the content areas.

- **Lisa Mudd's** classroom in **Dixie Elementary School** (Fayette County) reflects her background in Montessori training. Children play and work individually or in groups

of their own choosing. She has a strong literacy focus that includes family reading activities. Family members frequently come to the classroom to read and engage the children in extended activities. When Mudd makes home visits, she shares the parent guides connected with the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards as a way of encouraging home to school connections.

- **April Throgmorton's** classroom

at **Morgan Elementary School** (Paducah Independent) is blended with Head Start. Her program integrates high standards for both programs in a rich environment. The classroom is even extended into the outside play area. Throgmorton uses positive guidance techniques to encourage pro-social behavior and shows appreciation of children's efforts. One of the highlights of this classroom is the attention to diversity throughout the centers.

Teachers of the Year never wanted to do anything else

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Butch Hamm remembers the terror of having to stand in front of his peers to deliver a speech in high school – and the teacher he has to thank for making him do it. The 24-year veteran English and communications teacher said he owes a lot to Linda Whitt and his other high school English teachers at Bracken County High School.

"I recently received an e-mail from Linda Whitt, who has since retired and lives in Florida," Hamm said. "Linda said she often felt guilty about pushing a shy young man like myself to get up in front of the class and speak. But it was this pushing of my abilities that helped me to overcome the fear of speaking and performing in front of others. Had it not been for these wonderful teachers, I would still be a shy man afraid to interact with my peers."

Those same teachers also helped shape his teaching style, Hamm said. Rather than following the stand-and-lecture method of teaching, his teachers were finding ways to help tactile, auditory and visual learners before there was evidence that was important.

"I remember writing plays and acting out stories rather than just sitting there reading them," he said. "They emphasized choices."

It was by following this model that Hamm, who teaches at Larry A. Ryle High School (Boone County), was named Kentucky Teacher of the Year. Jan Vaughn Horn, a 5th-grade language arts teacher at Shearer Elementary School (Clark County), was named 2010 Elementary School Teacher of the Year, and Melissa Evans, a 7th-grade science teacher at Corbin Middle School (Corbin Independent) was named 2010 Middle School Teacher of the Year. The three were selected after teams of educators visited their classrooms to view them at work and to conduct personal interviews. Hamm received a \$10,000 award, and Horn and Evans each received \$3,000.

Hamm said he has always known that he wanted to be a teacher. His experience as a student teacher at Harrison County High School in the spring of 1981 cemented that decision, he said.

"Mrs. Florence was such a positive influence on me," Hamm said. "I was truly impressed how she worked tirelessly with students to bring positive changes in children's lives. This only reinforced the fact that I wanted to teach."

Horn said she also always wanted to teach. "I told my mom at 5 that I would become a teacher, and without any hesitation that is what I did," she said. "Teaching is all I have ever wanted to do, and I am not sure exactly why, but can't imagine myself doing anything else."

Evans comes from a family of teachers. Her mother taught 2nd grade for years and later in her career became a librarian. Her father taught science to 5th and 6th graders before he took a job as an elementary school principal.

She said her father also shaped her teaching styles.

"My father is an avid outdoorsman. Before 'hands-on' was even a buzzword in science education, he was using it in his classroom and to teach me," Evans said. "He constantly took me along on some great



Photo by Amy Wallot

*Kentucky Teacher of the Year Butch Hamm talks with his students about the vocabulary used in *The Crucible* during his Advanced Placement English II class at Larry A. Ryle High School (Boone County). A 24-year teaching veteran, Hamm has taught English and communication courses at Larry A. Ryle High for four years. Hamm is leader of the 11th-grade Instructional Learning Team and has been a Kentucky Teacher Internship Program resource teacher.*

adventure, from combing rock outcrops to find petrified wood to looking through fresh-plowed fields to find artifacts. He never lost his sense of exploration and was able to spread it to me. That is why I became a teacher. I want to instill the love of exploration in my students."

Evans believes teaching should be more than having students memorize facts and definitions. It should lead students to ask questions, analyze data and solve problems.

"I treat my students as scientists in training by creating hands-on, inquiry-based experiences," she said. "I use a project-based curriculum whenever possible that allows my students to see the relevance behind the science. My goals are for my students to be lifelong learners and develop a love for exploration."

Horn feels the same way.

"I hold all of my students and myself to high standards. I work well with others collaborating whenever needed to help all kids succeed," she said. "I differentiate instruction, use various modeling strategies and love to have fun and do projects."

Hamm also tries to make his teaching stand out to students. If that means driving across town to purchase a costume or an outfit that will entertain his students and

make them laugh, he will, because through humor they gain knowledge.

"I believe I got this award not because I am any different than the many colleagues in my own school and across the state who are just as deserving, but I received the award because I am like so many other teachers who care deeply about the success of their students," he said. "I treat each and every student like they are my own child. There is nothing that I wouldn't do to help them better their lives if it is in my means to do so."

That feeling comes across in the rapport that he shares with his students, Hamm said, enough so that it was a former student who nominated him for the Teacher of the Year award. He said he goes out of his way to show students that he is a real person capable of laughing at himself and crying when something moves him.

"I go out of the way to learn every student's name before the first two weeks are out," Hamm said. "Then I move to the next level of learning something about EVERY student to help me connect to each one individually. I am very observant. I watch for books they read, stickers on their notebooks and binders, clothing they wear, and music they listen to. All of these things are tools to

(See **Teachers** on page 12)

Other Kentucky Teacher Achievement Award Winners



Horn

Jan Vaughn Horn is beginning her ninth year of teaching at Shearer Elementary School (Clark County), where she teaches language arts to 5th-grade students. She has served on the Shearer Elementary School-Based Decision Making Council since 2005 and as a supervising teacher through the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) and for student teachers from Midway College.



Evans

Melissa Evans has taught for 16 years, with the past seven as a science teacher for 7th-grade students at Corbin Middle School (Corbin Independent). She has performed in leadership capacities throughout her career and currently serves as a resource teacher for the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) and for student teachers from Union College, the University of the Cumberlands and Eastern Kentucky University.

Crocker brings enthusiasm, idealism into his classroom

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Jay Crocker admits he had never heard of the Milken Family Foundation until it honored him with a national educator award.

The largest teacher-recognition program in the United States, the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were created to reward, retain and attract the highest-quality K-12 educators to the profession.

Each Milken Educator receives \$25,000 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Los Angeles to participate in the annual Milken National Education Conference.

Crocker is the lone Kentucky honoree this year and is the state's 50th recipient of the Milken Award since Kentucky joined the program in 1993.

Despite being the state's 50th recipient, the Milken Award was off his radar.

"I had never heard of it until the morning I was presented with the award," Crocker said. "When I told (presenter) Dr. (Jane) Foley about this, she stated 'It's fine that you never heard of us. You were busy teaching, not looking for awards.'"

Crocker is in his fourth year teaching English at Ballard High School (Jefferson

County). He also was a student there, having graduated in 1995.

"The best thing about Jay is the enthusiasm and idealism he brings into the classroom," said fellow English teacher Thomas Kalb, who taught at Ballard while Crocker was a student there.

That enthusiasm and idealism developed quickly after Crocker decided to get into teaching when he realized he missed the educational environment after finishing graduate school.

"My (teaching) style is pretty eclectic," Crocker said. "I am very energetic and interactive with my kids. My desk is nothing more than a horizontal surface for holding papers. You will never find me sitting at my desk during the school day. I am up and constantly moving throughout the room the entire day. I talk to my students; I question my students; I

lecture for my students; and I listen to my students.

"I will pretty much do anything in my classroom to make sure my students are learning," he added. "I use props for when we read plays, I use voices when I read with them and lecture them, and I move desks around for various activities. I make sure I

"I will pretty much do anything in my classroom to make sure my students are learning."

— Jay Crocker

Jay Crocker's influences

Crocker said there were two teachers who probably knew he would be a teacher some day. "They were just waiting for me to discover it," Crocker said.

"David Ricketts, my junior English teacher at Ballard High School, had more of an influence on my life than I first realized. He was one of those tough teachers with high expectations who helped me understand just what kind of an education I needed to be successful in the world. His expectations of me in his classroom are what I think of when I run my own classroom. I think to myself, 'Would Mr.

Ricketts accept this from a student; would he do this himself as a teacher?' If I answer no, then I know I need to make modifications to my lessons.

"The other teacher that led me down the path of education was Teresa Elliott. She was my band teacher at Ballard my sophomore and junior years. She is the one who taught me about interpersonal communication. She lived and taught by the adage, 'Treat every person you meet as if they are the most important person in the world.' I have tried to translate this into my classroom practice. I want all of my students to know they are the most important people in my life while they are in my classroom and in the hallways of Ballard High School."



Photo by Amy Wallot

John "Jay" Crocker gives a high five to senior Ronicka Daugherty, center, after being named the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winner in Kentucky. At left is senior Cyarra Wells and at right is Jane Foley of the Milken Family Foundation. Crocker is an English teacher at Ballard High School (Jefferson County). The award, which includes a \$25,000 prize, was presented at a surprise assembly at the school Oct. 8.

keep students involved. I feel that it's only when they're involved in their learning that they are truly learning."

Crocker added that he believes all students are capable of learning.

"I challenge myself to make sure that each of my students is learning something in my classroom every day," he said. "I have taught many levels of students from many different backgrounds, and I have experienced many obstacles as a teacher. However, when I leave my classroom each day, I want to be able to say that I would have wanted my own child in my classroom today. I think about this continually, and I work to make sure the answer would be a yes on a daily basis."

Crocker feels it's vital as an educator to experience teaching students at all achievement levels.

"Jay has a willingness to work with the lower-level kids," Kalb said. "Last year, he took on a group or maybe two of comprehensive-level seniors. I've been there myself, and let me tell you, it is not an easy task, especially during the senior year of high school. They are often good kids, but let's just say that learning isn't always the highest priority, and they often bring real and palpable tragedy into the classroom with them."

"Jay doesn't just speak to their brains," Kalb added. "He also feeds their souls, and he lets kids know that they are important – and they exist independent of their level of academic achievement."

Crocker said he tries to get to know each student – no matter the level.

"I have taught more levels than just Advanced Program and Advanced Placement. I expect that I will be teaching all levels of students in my future," Crocker said. "I try to have as many conversations with my students as I can. I don't just ask them about their school work, but I am truly interested in their life and their well-being. The genuine interest comes across to them, and I think they understand that I truly care."

Crocker feels one of his strongest assets as a teacher is his ability to monitor and improve his teaching practices when necessary.

"I am reflective. I constantly think about my teaching and how I can improve it," Crocker said. "It's almost an obsession for me. My friends and family know that everything I look at, read or experience has the potential to become a lesson in my classroom."

MORE INFO...

www.mff.org

Jay Crocker, jay.crocker@jefferson.kyschools.us, (502) 485-8206

Dropout prevention an 'individual' en

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Dave Downey, dropout prevention coordinator in Owen County, is preparing for a rescue mission. A high school senior from his district is living in Cincinnati. She's been kicked out of her home, he said, and she's "living with someone she shouldn't be." Downey's going to the Queen City to tell her he has found her a place to live and that her teachers will allow her to make up work and get her caught up.

"Will she come back? I don't know. But I've got to try," he said. "I've got to take a shot at it. 'She may just say no, but I have to go up there and at least let her know that offer is there for her if she wants to return.'"

In his rural county, with its low socio-economic level, high free/reduced-price school meals count and low level of parental education, Downey has students who will be the first in their families to graduate high school – if he can just help them break free of their heritage.

"That's a couple of generations, and somehow I'm trying to break those chains," he said. "If I can get those kids graduated, the chances are they'll marry someone with the same education or more, and they'll know the importance of that. Then they'll break the chain and make sure their kids get through."

Almost 6,500 Kentucky students – 3.3 percent – dropped out in 2008, according to data compiled by the Kentucky Department of Education. Statistically speaking, those students are twice as likely to slip into poverty, three times more likely to be unemployed and eight times more likely to end up in prison. So why would anyone drop out?

Pam Greene, in her sixth year as director of pupil personnel in Bell County, said economic factors are key in some instances, especially for young men.

"They obtain jobs in the coal mines and make pretty good money and see no need to continue the high school education," she said. "Hate to say this, but our community culture in the past has not valued an education."

What are dropouts?

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics definition, also adopted by the Kentucky Board of Education, dropouts are students that were enrolled for at least 30 days in a district the previous school year, then dropped out and did not re-enroll before October 1 of the current school year (or were not exempted by graduating; obtaining their GED or a certificate of completion/attainment for an IEP; transferred to another public, private, state or district approved educational program; not temporarily absent due to suspension; or death).

Beverly Brown Upchurch, dropout prevention coordinator in Clinton County for the past six years, said her students face the same pressures as those at other schools across the nation, which include poor attendance, lack of family support or parental involvement and teen pregnancy/parenthood.

Besides those, Upchurch said, small communities "have a disadvantage because of a lack of economic advantages. Our students just can't see a variety of jobs and means of making a living, so they don't understand the benefit of an education."

In Harlan County, dropout prevention director Kathy Napier said reasons to drop out include generational poverty, lack of educated parents and drugs.

Libby Taylor, a program consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education, said surveys from students who drop out indicate the most common reasons are:

- don't get along with teachers
- failing
- bored
- too much drama
- parenting
- no connection to adults at the school
- no connection with other students

Napier said she doesn't know if any dropout prevention strategies can change the factors that lead to students dropping out.

"The factors that contribute to our dropout rate are very difficult to overcome and although we may not be able to change these factors, what we can do is ask ourselves, 'What can we do to help a child be successful?' she said.

Schools are trying different things across the state, Taylor said. Some offer credit recovery through a variety of programs. Others are using forms of alternative schools and virtual learning.

Many are using the Secondary GED program, in which students are enrolled in school while completing their General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency degree, if they met qualifications for the program.

"It's really a last resort. It's not something you prefer to do instead of going to high



Beverly Upchurch, dropout prevention coordinator for Clinton County school district, works with students at Clinton County School. Clinton County's program is designed to target 7th-, 8th- and 10th-graders' reading skills. The students are either in churches or individuals.

school," Taylor said. "But for kids that are about to drop out and qualify, it's a wonderful thing."

The Department of Education is developing two classes in mathematics and reading that will be offered online through the Kentucky Virtual High School to every district in the state for free, she said. Otherwise, credit-recovery computer programs can cost as much as \$33,000 per year. The burden of cost for the program is determined between the school and its district.

Taylor said every school is different. "There is no 'magic bullet.' I can't say, 'Well, this will work in your school,' or 'That will work in your school,' or 'This is working somewhere else,'" Taylor said. "It depends on the school and the people and the kids and how much money they want to put toward it."

While there may not be a one-size-fits-all answer, those in charge of reducing the

dropout rate know teachers play a key role in any solution.

Teachers, with the support of the school administrators, can help students feel wanted, needed, important, respected and valued, Napier said. The entire staff must understand a student's situation, to understand that life for that student may not be easy. In her district, the writing consultant and truancy personnel target students who are falling behind. Truancy officials make home visits and encourage parents to send students to school. The writing consultant meets with students and then with teachers or Napier to see what can be done to help students get back on track, she said.

"We do not leave it up to the student to communicate with the teacher," Napier said. "For at-risk students, they need someone to be their voice."

Upchurch agreed on how important teachers are to the success of each child's future.

deavor



Photos by Amy Wallot

ing the Read 180 program at Clinton County Middle
nts also receive mentoring from clubs, organizations,



Harlan County High School e-liaison Gayle Jurgens assists students Kerry Partin, left, and Jeffery Glover with their business mathematics assignment. Harlan County offers many opportunities for credit recovery including e-school out of school, e-school in school, teacher-made packets for students who fail by 10 points or less, seven-plus day and ESS after school.

Bell County

Greene said the driving force behind dropouts is catching them before they become dropouts. The superintendent, administrators, teachers, parents, and school and FRYSC staff serve on a dropout-prevention committee that works on strategies to do just that. The school uses the Secondary GED program and has an alternative school.

Greene said she especially likes an initiative the district started a few years ago in which the high school FRYSC director plans a day with all other FRYSC staff and the faculty of the freshman students. This meeting occurs within the first three weeks of school. The K-8 FRYSC staff spends the day at the high school. The first half of the day, the principal arranges for a substitute for half of the freshman teachers. Each school's FRYSC staff tells the needs and challenges of every former 8th-grade student from the school who is now a 9th-grade student. This happens again in the afternoon.

"Every student – not just the truant, slow learners, etc. – every student," she said.

Another initiative she likes is one where the faculty, homeless director, FRYSC staff, parent liaison and counselor at each school meet and compile a list of students they consider to be in need of extra attention due to low grades, low self-esteem, home issues and other issues. The names are then passed to all faculty and staff in the building, and at least one person agrees to be that child's mentor.

"The child may not be aware of this event," Greene said. "It is just a matter of an adult

taking the time to make sure to speak to the child daily, inquire about homework, how was his or her weekend. In some instances the mentor is a custodian, lunchroom cook, bus driver or anyone in the building that feels he or she has a connection to the child."

Clinton County

Upchurch, the dropout prevention coordinator, said outside mentors help students at Clinton County Middle School. Mentoring comes from clubs, organizations, churches or just individuals.

"The mentor usually goes to school once or twice a week, depending on the time he or she has available to spend with the student. The student is allowed to leave class to spend time with the mentor. They can talk, work on a project, do homework, eat lunch together and more," Upchurch said. "The teacher understands the student may be out of his or her class, but the student will be required to make that work up."

Upchurch works at both the high school and the middle school each day. Clinton County's program is designed to target 7th, 8th and 10th graders but is not limited to serving only these students through this program. She works on reading at both schools.

"We know that students who are weak in reading have a higher risk of dropping out of school than their peers with higher or average reading levels," Upchurch said.

The district collaborates on many other programs with the county, as well, she said. Those include partnering with FRYSC and

Extended School Services and federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and Safe Schools.

The district also is using Bry's Behavior Monitoring and Reinforcement Program in the 7th and 8th grades for the second year. Students are monitored by each teacher every day and are given check marks for items such as attendance, being on time, having materials, good behavior and more. Each week they meet with their Bry's leader, go over their checklists and discuss their behavior.

"We have a lot of programs, just as most other schools do in Kentucky," Upchurch said. "However, I believe what helps us is our communication. We have an instructional supervisor who attempts to spread the word on what is going on with everyone so we know what is out there and what we can grab hold of and take advantage of for our kids. That's a good thing."

Harlan County

Taylor, with the Department of Education, said Harlan County is doing a lot of things right. It offers many opportunities for credit recovery, as students can go to school on their own schedules and work on a lab or can take papers and work on their computers at home.

Napier, the Harlan County dropout prevention director, said the school offers e-school out of school, e-school in school, teacher-made packets for students receiving incompletes, seven-plus day and ESS after school. The Secondary GED also is an option for students who are more than two years behind.

E-school out of school is a performance-based credit system used to accommodate students who cannot attend school for a specific reason. These students are able to take courses on an alternate schedule with online courses or independent study packets that are monitored very closely, she said. For e-school in school, students are placed in the e-school lab for one or two periods, where they are able to work at a faster pace to acquire more credits in a smaller time frame. The courses are offered through Jefferson County's e-school program.

Teacher-made packets are class-specific, teacher-created packets for students who failed their class by no more than 10 points. Teachers give these packets to students to complete within a timeframe agreed upon between teacher and student, Napier said. For the seven-plus day credit system, students attend a regular school day and complete a performance-based independent

(See **Dropout** on page 12)

Child-focused East Heights one of five 2009 Blue Ribbon schools

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

When Denisa Townsend was a student at East Heights Elementary School (Henderson County) during the late 1970s, the focus was on classes and the school as a whole.

Now that she is in her 13th year as a teacher at the school, she said the focus has clearly changed over the years.

"East Heights was a good school (before), but now we definitely focus more on the child," Townsend said. "We teach to the standards, but technology allows us to provide individualized learning specific to the child's ability. I don't remember education being that way when I was a student here."

The concentration on individualized learning and keeping up with the benefits of technology are just a few reasons East Heights was named a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School, along with four other state public elementary schools. The award recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Blue Ribbon Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Analyzing data

East Heights Elementary is home to 549 pre-K-5 students this year. Second-year principal Nancy Gibson said persistent focus on student achievement data helped the school earn its Blue Ribbon recognition.

"Student achievement data is analyzed in multiple methods," Gibson said. "Teachers use the Kentucky Core Content Test, which tests grades 3-5 in elementary school. When test results are returned in September, the school leadership and teachers analyze the scores by sub-skill content areas, by teacher and by individual student."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Second-grade students Larry Parker, far left, Jaxton Mclevain, left, Torianna Tramill and Darrien Givens work on SRA Reading Mastery instruction with reading teacher Cindy Borum at East Heights Elementary School (Henderson County). Reading interventionists give extra assistance to students in grades 1-3. Below-level kindergarten students also may receive small-group help with school reading clinics.

"They create a 'name and claim' list of students who are not performing on grade level," Gibson added. "Then, the name and claim list is assigned student by student to teachers for them to assume responsibility for the individual student achievement, which is necessary to move each student to grade level."

Gibson said teachers initially felt threatened that class results would be shared by their peers.

"However, over time it became apparent that teachers became more motivated to reach out to each other to seek solutions for every student's success," Gibson said. "In addition, teachers became aware of the success other teachers were having, and they were empowered with the hope that their students could also be more successful and could learn at much more rigorous levels. Now teachers openly share their successes and their difficulties with each other and draw on each other as resources."

Significant changes

The school has made great strides in reading and mathematics the last four years.

"Two of the initiatives that I believe have helped the students improve test scores and gain a better education experience are our open-response coaching and RTI (Response to Intervention) programs," said Curriculum Specialist Julie Schneider. "We started the open-response coaching process a few years ago. The strategies taught during coaching help the students organize and answer the open-ended questions on our state accountability test."

Reading and mathematics interventionists give extra assistance to students in grades 1-3. Below-level kindergarten students also may receive small-group help with school reading clinics.

"With these programs, we are able to better meet the individual needs of students who are struggling," Schneider said.

High expectations are placed on both students and teachers, Townsend said.

"We have toured and met with teachers of higher performing schools to get ideas of how we could better our own school," Townsend said. "That was crucial."

East Heights Elementary School is one of five Kentucky public elementary schools to be named as a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. The other schools will be profiled in upcoming issues of *Kentucky Teacher*. They are:

- Hager Elementary School (Ashland Independent)
- Paint Lick Elementary School (Garrard County)
- Potter Gray Elementary School (Bowling Green Independent)
- Ruth Moyer Elementary School (Fort Thomas Independent)

We gained a lot of very useful knowledge by doing that."

High school helpers

For the past five years, East Heights Elementary has put Henderson County High School students to work in the classroom as mentors. High school students interested in a teaching career earn high school credit for working as mentors and teaching assistants and providing clerical help to their assigned teachers.

This has proven to be beneficial for not only both sets of students, but the teachers as well.

"East Heights leaders designed a program of mentorship between their elementary students and high school students," Gibson said. "High school students assist their younger students by practicing reading, spelling, math facts and so much more on a daily basis," Gibson said. "The elementary students gain so much from their mentors as the mentors actively engage the students in learning on a one-on-one basis, while the high school students learn vital lessons in mentorship and, more importantly, earn credit for their work."

Schneider had student mentors each year she was in a classroom prior to becoming the school's curriculum specialist.

"I was fortunate to have several different senior high school helpers," Schneider said. "Some had natural teaching instincts. They would come in each day, be able to take a group of students and follow simple instructions for leading a lesson. This enabled me to create smaller group sizes for individualized instruction. Other high school

helpers came in during my silent reading time at the end of the day. The helpers would read to the kids, listen to the kids read and assist the students in taking computerized comprehension tests on the books they had read.

"Having extra hands in the classroom is always a blessing to a busy teacher," Schneider added. "The time of day the high school helper was assigned to my classroom and the motivation/confidence level of the helper dictated how much actual teaching the helper was able to do."

Townsend saw a student thrive in her classroom last year thanks to a high school student mentor.

"I had a student helper last year who was able to work one-on-one with a student who was struggling, both socially and academically," Townsend said. "She was able to give some of the much-needed personal attention, as well as review and encourage the daily lessons with the student. She also was able to help with clerical work, which allowed me to spend more time on instructional planning and preparation."

"Our school is made up of an amazing staff of teachers and support staff," Townsend added. "We are a very strong team of dedicated individuals. We aren't doing anything that is 'unique,' we are just doing everything we can to reach every child."

MORE INFO...

www.henderson.k12.ky.us/schools/ehs.htm

Nancy Gibson, nancy.gibson@henderson.kyschools.us, (270) 831-5070

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Student achievement hinges on teachers being 'in the know'

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

As a business teacher at Bath County High School, Jeremy Booher's ultimate goal is to prepare his students for their future careers. To get that job, however, students must first conquer those tricky interviews.

"I always tell my students that throughout my life I have been to 11 interviews and out of those interviews, I have been offered a job nine times," Booher said. "This establishes the ground for me knowing my content on interviewing skills. I teach the students the skills as far as dressing for the interview, how to answer questions, posture and more."

Booher backs up his knowledge of content by routinely allowing a random student to interview him on the spot in front of the class.

"I go through the whole interview with the student and let him or her ask any question that pertains to an interview," Booher said. "The only stipulation I have is that since I am a teacher, it must be a teaching interview. To this day, I have never stumbled during any of my interviews. I always know how to answer each question even when not knowing what the next question will be. It's never rehearsed. Once I am finished, you can see my students' eyes light up as they usually always say they would hire me. This knowledge of content has made a big difference in teaching this lesson."

Stacy Isaac used her knowledge of content to go above and beyond high-quality learn-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Jeremy Booher helps freshman Allie Byrd with a PowerPoint presentation about the career she is interested in during Business Principles class at Bath County High School.

ing during a lesson a few years back when she was teaching a 5th-grade language arts lesson on Anne Frank and the Holocaust.

"For many years, I had been intrigued with and had studied the Holocaust," said Isaac, now a kindergarten teacher at Martha Jane Potter Elementary School (Letcher County). "When we began the unit, I could present information to my students that they would not have normally received

from just the language arts curriculum and integrated the unit with history as well. I even shared with them my own experiences with visiting the (United States) Holocaust (Memorial) Museum and various books that I had read about it.

"My content knowledge about the Holocaust really enhanced their learning and their desire to learn more about it," Isaac added. "I had several students getting books from the library and even had one go and visit the museum during her summer vacation."

Knowledge of content is a vital section of the *Characteristics of High Quality Teaching and Learning* from the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Teaching and Learning.

It's vital in that it establishes a baseline in which students have confidence in the material they are being taught, and just as important, confidence in the teacher.

Josh Tucker, a social studies teacher at Franklin-Simpson Middle School (Simpson

County), gave an example of how his knowledge of content helped develop a bond between a student who appeared to have little faith in his teachers.

"In one of my first years teaching, I had a very intelligent student who had a history of trying to cut teachers down and question everything they said," Tucker said. "After all of the procedural stuff that kicks off the year, he asked me a very obscure question, thinking he would know something I didn't. Luckily, I knew all about the topic and gave him more info than he could ever want to know."

Tucker added that by answering the student's question thoroughly, he not only got the student to believe in Tucker's content knowledge, but the whole class as well.

Booher, Isaac and Tucker all start with *Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment and Program of Studies* in expanding their knowledge of content. The three teachers also have other favorite resources and professional development, which enhance their own content knowledge and allow their students to get the most out of classroom instruction.

Tucker also relies heavily on e-mail and SynchronEyes, a piece of computer software that connects a teacher's computer to the other computers in the classroom through a wired or wireless network.

"Through e-mail, my students are able to submit assignments to me and communicate with one another inside and outside of the classroom. E-mail allows me to send students daily objectives, agendas, attached projects and feedback. SynchronEyes allows me to view the students' computer screens live. I can message each student individually; I also can turn on a chat feature or broadcast their screens to the rest of the class. These two resources make my classroom virtually paperless."

Isaac uses the National Center for Teacher Mathematics standards, while the content she covers in reading and language arts is dictated by Martha Jane Potter's status as a Reading First school.

(See **Students** on page 12)

What is knowledge of content?

"**Knowledge of content** is how well you know what you are teaching. Are you up on the latest trends in your field, and how well do you relate this information to your students?" — Jeremy Booher

"**Knowledge of content** means that one is highly qualified and trained in specific content areas. Teachers must have a true and intrinsic understanding of the content that he or she must present to students. This encompasses skills, theories, principles, strategies and concepts that are part of the content that must be covered. I feel that it can also include information or knowledge of a particular subject or topic that is gained through life experiences." — Stacy Isaac

"**Knowledge of content** requires teachers to constantly seek out new information to enrich their classrooms with. I feel that being more than competent in your knowledge of the content is necessary in order to adequately teach your students. Your students, parents and fellow teachers need to trust in your knowledge of the content. Being knowledgeable of the content also helps you to address any misconceptions or rarely addressed topics. I was always intrigued by the weird story or odd fact as a student. For this reason, I feel it necessary to display knowledge with not only basic content, but the odd or enriching content as well. This piques my students' interest." — Josh Tucker



Graphic by John Boone, adapted courtesy of David Colten and Deborah Ball

Dropout from page 9

course at home, she said. All independent courses are under the supervision and direction of the district's e-school liaison. After-school tutoring also provides students with an opportunity to make up time and class work missed. Guidelines for after school are set by the specific classroom teacher in the class the student is failing.

Besides having a dropout coordinator, the district also has dropout staff at every school. Court-designated workers come to the school weekly so students don't have to leave school, and the district does a lot of testing, Taylor said.

"They're trying to find the reason why a kid's having problems so they can tailor a program to it," she said.

Napier said one of the major components of Harlan County's dropout prevention program is literacy. Each school (eight elementary/middle and one high) has a literacy coach, who is part of the dropout prevention program.

All students who score at novice on state assessments are placed in the program, she said, and other students may be placed in the program by teacher referral. The district also has a remedial reading course for 9th graders to reinforce reading strategies to students who struggled with reading entering the 9th grade.

Napier said district and circuit court judges work with school personnel to help keep students in school rather than have the students serve jail time due to truancy. Several students are attending e-school as a recommendation or alternative plan agreed



Photo by Amy Wallot

Students at Cawood Elementary School (Harlan County) use My Reading Coach, which gives each student a unique reading diagnosis and one-on-one lesson instruction.

upon by a judge, she said.

"The court system and school system are very much in agreement, and our collaboration on students is routine," she said.

Owen County

Downey, who prefers to be called a graduation counselor to a dropout prevention coordinator, has been on the job about a year. He is targeting elementary students by trying to be as visible as possible to the youngest students.

"It got all those kids to know me," he said.

"You don't know who's at risk at the primary schools. They've never even heard the word 'dropout.'"

Downey, too, is focusing on helping struggling readers, though that is not so surprising coming from a former speech pathologist. He gave librarians money from a grant to buy books for some at-risk students during a book fair. He also helps pay for positions that help improve reading and mathematics.

"If you can't get counseling until you're in the 8th or 9th grade, all that has probably festered inside you for four or five years," Downey said.

For older students, he said he and the district's pupil personnel director watch attendance.

"Truancy is the root of all evil," he said.

And some kids, despite his best efforts, decide to drop out, Downey said. But that doesn't mean he gives up on them. "Every kid that drops out tells you, 'I'm going to get my GED,'" he said.

Downey said he hounds them to make sure they are working toward it.

"When they're gone, they're not gone. You've still got to follow up on them," Downey said. "It's still important that they be successful and get a GED for themselves later on, and that's the whole deal— to make that kid have a better life somewhere down the line."

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=DOP
Libby Taylor, libby.taylor@education.ky.gov, (502) 564-4772

Teachers from page 6

a relationship with each and every student in my classroom. The sooner I get to know them, the stronger bond I have with them in the classroom."

Hamm said he tries to learn from his students just as he asks them to learn from him.

"I find that I am learning something every day in my classroom," he said. "I am not just a teacher, I am a learner."

Horn said that is a good example for all teachers to follow, and she would like to see all teachers try to receive their National Board Certification.

"This process helped me reflect on my own abilities as a teacher, and through this process, I grew more than during any other process in my teaching career," she said. "This process shaped me into the teacher I am today."

Evans agreed that teachers, no matter how talented, need to work to improve.

"Don't ever stop learning. Step out of your comfort zone because you will grow from the experience," she said. "One thing that makes an outstanding teacher is to continually look for ways to improve and grow. You do have to be ready to accept failure when you try new strategies and methods. Some things I thought would work wonderfully, failed miserably. Without those failures I would not have grown or found the strategies that were successful."

MORE INFO...

Butch Hamm, butch.hamm@boone.kyschools.us, (859) 384-5300
Jan Vaughn Horn, jan.horn@clark.kyschools.us, (859) 744-4978
Melissa Evans, melissa.evans@corbin.kyschools.us, (606) 523-3619

Students from page 11

"In my classroom, I use KET Encyclopedia, Study Island, BrainPop and EdHelper and have just been trained in Discovery Education's Think Link," Isaac said. "I use these resources to enhance a particular concept or skill that I am covering in class. Most of these reach both the visual and the auditory learners."

Tucker said he's been fortunate to be a participant the past four years in a Teaching American History grant.

"This has provided me with a wide variety of resources, activities and knowledge," said Tucker, who has seen a lot of success in his classroom thanks to Thinkfinity and UnitedStreaming. "I have truly been blessed to be a part of this grant and would strongly

encourage any teacher to take advantage of similar opportunities in their content areas.

"Through this experience, I also have learned that it is very beneficial to just listen to what other teachers do in their classrooms, regardless of the content," Tucker added. "I have gotten some really cool ideas from other content areas in my building."

Tucker is also known to jazz up his social studies lessons with rap music.

"I have embraced some of the Thoughtful Ed strategies," Tucker said. "The use of task rotations has been especially helpful in the reaching of more of my students. I also like to use compare-and-contrast strategies. I also use vocabulary notebooks in my classroom. Most of the time, we will take notes in this format. It helps students organize their ideas."

Isaac stresses that while knowledge of

content is critical for teachers and students, it's not the only piece to the puzzle.

"Knowledge and a deep understanding of the multiple strands of any selected discipline are very necessary, but being able to have an understanding of the intended audience will make all the difference," she said. "Having all of this vast knowledge, an understanding of the modalities, multiple intelligences, and strengths/weaknesses of the audience, along with creating the most productive environment for the learning to occur will allow students to become successful individuals."

"The audience must be prepared for learning to take place and daily formative assessments should be utilized to guide the instructional delivery sequences," Isaac added. "If the above things are in place, then

learning of the clearly intended knowledge, skills and/or content of the discipline will occur."

Booher agreed that knowledge of content and knowledge of who a teacher's students are go hand in hand.

"I feel that, to be a successful teacher, you must know your content and you must be able to relate your content to your students," Booher said. "Students don't care how much you know unless you can apply it to their lives."

MORE INFO...

Jeremey Booher, Jeremey.booher@bath.kyschools.us, (606) 674-6325
Stacy Isaac, stacy.isaac@letcher.kyschools.us, (606) 855-7544
Josh Tucker, josh.tucker@simpson.kyschools.us, (270) 586-4401

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

KAPT honors several school officials

The Kentucky Association of Pupil Transportation (KAPT) honored several individuals at its annual conference for their contributions to the safe delivery of students to and from the state's schools. The recognitions are:

- Mitzi Stumph, Spencer County, Driver Trainer of the Year
- Daniel Freeman, Montgomery County, Superintendent of the Year
- Harold W. Witt, board member, Montgomery County, inducted into the Hall of Fame
- Edie Lowe, Warren County, Special Needs Driver of the Year
- Michael London, Warren County, Bus Driver of the Year

The organization also announced the awarding of college scholarship funds to students from the Boone County, Caverna Independent, Hart County and Pineville Independent school districts.

Report says high school exit exams help graduation rates

A new study by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) finds that although high school exit exam policies are increasingly complicated and diverse across states, there is an upward trend in initial passage rates by students. Also, more states use exit exams for accountability under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and have designed varied alternate pathways to graduation.

The report, *State High School Exit Exams: Trends in Test Programs, Alternate Pathways, and Pass Rates*, draws from CEP's eight-year study of high school exit exams to identify long-term trends in state policies and student performance. To gather data for the report, CEP surveyed all 26 states that have or plan to have mandatory exit exams for high school seniors and interviewed officials in three states. (Kentucky is not included among these states.)

The report is divided into three topics of study. The first part of the report describes the evolution of policies governing state exit exams and examines long-term changes in the types and amount of technical assistance and financial support related to exit exams that states provide to school districts, educators and students. The second part focuses on this year's special topic – alternate pathways to graduation that states offer students who are struggling to pass exit exams. CEP also analyzes trends and gaps in students' exit exam pass rates.

One aspect of state exit exam policy that



Photo by Amy Wallot

Food as art

Simon Kenton High School (Kenton County) art teacher Tamara Smith paints toilet paper bacon for the cheeseburger she created during the Kentucky Art Education Association's annual conference and workshop at Rosa Parks Elementary School (Fayette County). The session, led by Murray State University art professor Camille Serre, focused on creating realistic food sculptures using toilet paper, water and paint.

has changed since CEP started its research in this area is the use of exit exams for NCLB accountability. In 2002, two states used their exit exams to meet NCLB's high school testing requirements. By 2009, 24 of the 26 states with exit exams used these tests for NCLB purposes. Among 24 states, 14 use the same cut scores for passage on exit exams and NCLB proficiency, and nine use lower cut scores for passage on exit exams than for NCLB proficiency. Fifteen states use student performance on the first administration of the tests for NCLB accountability purposes.

The report also highlights a growing trend among states to establish alternate pathways to graduation for students who are struggling to pass exit exams. Alternate pathways help students who have difficulty passing exit exams but who can demonstrate mastery of high school-level knowledge in other ways. The report describes the various alternate pathway designs, such as alternative assessments and diplomas, flexible cut scores and waivers. According to the report, 22 of the 26 states now offer specific alternatives for students with disabilities and some states have alternative options for English-language learners.

The report looks at the initial pass rates

for the 16 states that reported at least three consecutive years of data. CEP found that 11 of the 16 states showed an average annual growth in the proportion of students passing the test in reading, and 13 states showed average annual growth in mathematics. CEP also studied the passage rate gaps between African-American and Latino students and white students, as well as between students eligible for free and reduced-price meals and all students. The report finds that although many states narrowed the gaps in initial pass rates among the various student groups over the years, the gaps remain large in both subjects.

CEP offers recommendations for states to improve their exit exam policies, including increasing funding to remedial programs; creating better communication to students and parents about alternate pathways to graduation; increasing oversight of alternate pathways designed for students with disabilities; and collecting data on cumulative pass rates. CEP also proposes a research agenda that should be pursued to develop a deeper understanding of the effects of exit exams.

www.cep-dc.org

National Youth Leadership conference held in Louisville

Youth from around the country convened at the "Grasp Greatness" Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) 2009 National Cluster Meeting recently in Louisville.

Attendees participated in a weekend of unique opportunities that challenged, informed and motivated members and their chapter advisers to explore opportunities available through FCCLA: The Ultimate Leadership Experience. They examined new ways to help them succeed in their families, careers and communities. This weekend meeting was intended to increase youth awareness about such areas as career exploration, family relationships, self-esteem, youth violence prevention and other current issues affecting teens.

Five FCCLA national youth officers presided over the general sessions throughout the weekend. National Vice President of Finance Alli Grant, of Mercer County High School, conducted the meeting with the other national officers.

State President Elizabeth Delaney, from Pendleton County High School, hosted the event. FCCLA partners, chapters, advisers and members from across the country presented workshops at the meeting on topics including financial fitness, leadership training and FCCLA's Japanese Exchange program.

Whitley County High School's FCCLA chapter presented a youth workshop on "Money Rocks: Making Financial Fitness Fun."

Louisville was the site of one of three nationally sponsored training conferences this fall. The National Cluster Meetings are designed to allow local students and teachers to take advantage of high-quality leadership training opportunities. Meetings also were held in Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City.

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America is a national student organization that helps young men and women become leaders and address important personal, family, work and societal issues through family and consumer sciences education. FCCLA has more than 219,000 members and more than 6,500 chapters from 50 state associations, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences & Workshops

Kentucky Center for Mathematics

The Kentucky Center for Mathematics (KCM) is hosting the 2010 KCM Conference Feb. 4-5 in Frankfort. Registration and speaker proposals are now being accepted. Early bird registration ends Jan. 10, 2010. Late registration ends Jan. 27.

www.kymath.org

Free registration for seminars

The National Humanities Center is offering 40 Kentucky teachers free registration for its spring 2010 online seminars for U.S. History and American Literature teachers. Those interested can e-mail Caryn Koplik, ckoplik@nationalhumanitiescenter.org, at the National Humanities Center.

McConnell Conference

Registration is open for the 2010 McConnell Conference, which will be held Feb. 26-27, 2010 in Lexington. The McConnell Conference draws librarians, teachers and other professionals who work with youth to share ideas, examine materials, and meet authors, illustrators and other leaders in the field of youth literature. Speakers include John Green, David Wiesner and Dandi Daley Mackall. Contact Melissa Gardner, melissa.gardner@uky.edu, for more information.

www.uky.edu/CommInfoStudies/SLIS/McConnellConference

2010 summer seminars in American history

K-12 history, social studies and English teachers are invited to apply to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History 2010 Summer Seminars. Taught by renowned historians, these one-week seminars give educators the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of topics in American history while gaining practical resources and strategies to take back to their classrooms. Application deadline is Feb. 15, 2010.

www.gilderlehrman.org/education/seminar_course_offerings.php

Diversity event

Eastern Kentucky University's College of Education will be hosting its ninth annual diversity conference Feb. 10-11. The conference will focus on diversity strands: Cultural Competency and Equity; Equity in Poverty;

and Equity in Disability. The conference will address dropout prevention and response to intervention issues. Twelve hours of EILA credit will be available. For more information, contact Tom Bonny, tom.bonny@eku.edu or (859) 622-8330.

Toyota International Teacher Program

Applications being accepted for the 2010 Toyota International Teacher Program to Costa Rica, a fully-funded professional development program for U.S. educators, which aims to advance environmental stewardship and global connectedness in U.S. schools and communities. The program will take place June 18 – July 3, 2010, and the deadline to apply is Jan. 6. Librarians and full-time classroom teachers of all subjects for grades 6–12 are eligible. For more information, e-mail toyotateache@iie.org or call (877) 832-2457.

www.toyota4education.com

Virtual Economics or Capstone Modules

Teachers can register to complete online professional development offered by the National Council on Economic Education for Virtual Economics (K-12) or Capstone Economics (HS) and can receive a Virtual Economics CD and/or Capstone materials (2-book set). Supplies are limited and will be distributed to teachers completing the modules on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Susan Sandage, susan@econ.org, at (502) 267-3570.

www.econ.org/pd/

Contests & Other Events

TEAMS competition

The University of Kentucky is inviting students to participate in a local competition with national recognition. TEAMS (Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science) is a unique and challenging academic competition that helps prepare students for tomorrow's world today. Competition will be March 6, 2010. This year's theme is "Water, Water, Everywhere!" The University of Kentucky will be providing scholarships to all students in the division winner team to attend UK College of Engineering for undergraduate studies. Registration deadline is Feb 12, 2010. For more information, contact Metty Joseph, mjoseph@engr.uky.edu, at (859) 257-0180.

www.engr.uky.edu/outreach/teams.html

Social entrepreneurship scholarship

Students in rural-area Kentucky schools who have a passion for using technology skills to make a positive social change in the world or at home in their communities can apply for a social entrepreneurship scholarship. Applicants must be an active member of the Student Technology Leadership Program at their respective high schools. Deadline to apply is May 1, 2010.

http://ruraltechfund.org/rtf_scholarship.php

ExploraVision awards

ExploraVision is a science competition sponsored by Toshiba and administered by the National Science Teachers Association. It encourages K–12 students to create and explore visions of future technology. Winning teams receive \$10,000 in savings bonds and a trip to Washington, D.C. Entries are due Feb. 2.

<http://exploravision.org>

'Survival Design Challenge'

The National Academy of Engineering is sponsoring an engineering essay contest on EngineerGirl Web site. The contest for this year, entitled "Survival Design Challenge," is for students in grades 3-12. Cash prizes will be awarded to winners. Deadline to enter is March 10, 2010. For more information, e-mail to engineergirl@nae.edu.

www.engineergirl.org/CMS/Contest.aspx

Digital learning content repository

Kentucky's education community launched a repository of high-quality digital learning content that will be available to all P-20 educators. The repository, called the Kentucky Learning Depot, will help educators add standards-based digital content, such as textbooks, animations and videos, to their courses and vastly expand the resources available to each educator.

<http://kylearningdepot.org>

Einstein fellowship

The Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship is a paid fellowship for K-12 mathematics, science and technology teachers. Einstein Fellows spend a school year in Washington, D.C., serving in a federal agency or on Capitol Hill. To be considered

(Continued on page 15)



Photo by Amy Wallot

East Heights Elementary School
(Henderson County)

BULLETIN BOARD *(continued)*

for an Einstein Fellowship for the 2010-11 school year, apply and submit three letters of recommendation online by Jan. 13, 2010. For more information, contact Program Manager Kathryn Culbertson at culbertsonk@triangle-coalition.org.

www.einsteinfellows.org/application.html

Science teachers

Amgen encourages excellence in science education by recognizing and honoring extraordinary K-12 science teachers with the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. Since the program's 1992 inception, Amgen has awarded nearly \$2.5 million to educators who make outstanding contributions to science teaching and a measurable impact on students' lives. The 34 selected winners will receive an unrestricted cash award of \$5,000, with the recipient's school receiving an additional \$5,000 in the form of a restricted grant to be used for the expansion or enhancement of science programs, science resources or professional development of science teachers. Application deadline is Feb. 5, 2010. For more information, e-mail amgenfoundation@amgen.com or call (805) 447-4056.

www.amgen.com/citizenship/aaste.html

Digital film contest

The second annual Young Minds Digital Times Film Competition, presented by KidThrive.org in partnership with *Converge* magazine, is free to all student filmmakers in grades 6-12. Registration ends Feb. 19, 2010, and all entries are due by March 19. Among other prizes, the teacher and the school with the most student entries in "Track One: Young Filmmakers Doing Good," will each win \$1,000.

www.youngmindsdigitaltimes.com/prizes.php

Resources

'ReadyZone H1N1'

KET EncycloMedia has a new feature, called "ReadyZone H1N1." In this compilation of resources are:

- videos for all grade levels
- an explanation of the four rules to fight the virus
- access to a free H1N1 Preparedness web-cast with speakers from the Department of Homeland Security, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education
- downloadable documents with information from the CDC

- helpful documents to aid in assuring the continuity of high-quality teaching and learning while students and teachers are away from school

In addition to these KET EncycloMedia resources, there also is a Web site dedicated to KET's Oct. 20 call-in program about the current flu season. This Web site includes links to additional resources that may be useful to you and your communities.

www.ket.org/contact/education.htm

Classical music

Teachers can access a new Web site with basic information about classical music that was created in cooperation with W.W. Norton & Company and is built around Essential Classics, the series specially designed to introduce the best music of every period. Throughout the site, viewers can find almost 200 excerpts from Essential Classics as well as:

- **Eras:** overviews of the six main periods in music history — Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20th Century
- **Composers:** brief biographies of nearly 70 composers, which bring to life the artists and their works
- **Glossary:** 200 definitions with numerous musical examples

www.essentialsofmusic.com

News Quiz on KET

News Quiz is KET's weekly 15-minute current events television program for upper elementary/middle school students. The program consists of news segments, a current events quiz, "Letters to News Quiz," and periodic "News Kids" features that may include reports submitted by students. Once the program airs live, it is streamable/downloadable on the *News Quiz* Web site. For more information, e-mail newsquiz@ket.org. Send letters to: News Quiz c/o KET, 600 Cooper Drive, Lexington, KY 40502-2296.

www.ket.org/newsquiz

EdGate offers resources

EdGate offers a suite of Web-based learning solutions that are secure, flexible, practical, user-friendly and aligned to teaching standards. Solutions are designed to help districts improve student performance and meet requirements through high-quality instructional content, test data analytics, assessment resources and the country's most widely used parent-teacher-student communication tool.

www.edgate.com/index.html



Photo by Amy Wallot

Hallway art

Students at Adair County Elementary School walk past a school bus that is built into a hallway inside the school. When Adair County Elementary opened in August 2006, the bus was included as part of the school's interior design. The bus, no longer used by the district to transport students, was prepared for installation by Barney Taylor and the students of the Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center (Russell County).

Copyright and plagiarism Web site

Northern Kentucky University film students have collaborated with the school's W. Frank Steely Library to unveil Creative Thinking, a free educational copyright and plagiarism Web site ideal for middle and high school classes. The Web site includes lessons, films and activities for teen students. This is a plagiarism- and copyright-awareness program for teachers to incorporate in virtually all class disciplines. National education standards from Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning and the American Library Association's Information Literacy Assessment guidelines, as well as standards from Kentucky and Ohio, are incorporated into the curriculum. For more information, contact John Schlipp, schlippj1@nku.edu, at (859) 572-7621.

<http://creativethinking.nku.edu>

Planning for college

High school counselors can receive free books to distribute to students who are planning and preparing for college. The books are published by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). *Getting In* is a complete guide for high school seniors. *Affording Higher Education* describes nearly 4,300 different financial aid programs

specifically for Kentucky students. KHEAA also publishes online versions of three other books for high school students. *Getting Started* advises freshmen on how to use their high school years to prepare for college. *Getting Set* provides sophomores more detailed information about making the most of high school and financial aid programs available to Kentucky students. For juniors, *Getting Ready* explains the college admissions and financial aid processes, provides a game plan for checking out colleges and lists questions to ask of the colleges being considered. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, call (800) 928-8926.

www.GoHigherKY.org





Photo by Amy Wallot

Award recognition

Linda Holbrook chats with Kevin Noland at the Kentucky Board of Education meeting Dec. 9. Holbrook, the Reading First coordinator for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), was the recipient of the first Kevin M. Noland Award presented by the Kentucky Board of Education. The Kevin M. Noland Award is presented annually to a KDE staff member who focuses on the mission for student proficiency; is an excellent ambassador for Kentucky, the Department of Education and Kentucky's schools; is knowledgeable and productive; and has made an impact in one of the following areas: school districts, community partners, parents and/or co-workers through leadership, customer service, teamwork and community service. The award is named for former Interim Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Associate Commissioner and General Counsel Kevin M. Noland, who served the Department of Education for 18 years.

Kentucky
Teacher

612 Capital Plaza Tower,
500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lexington, Kentucky
Permit No. 513



KHS school programs take students beyond textbooks

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) offers two school-based programs that engage students with history – the Kentucky Junior Historical Society (KJHS) and Kentucky's National Day. Both programs offer hands-on activities that teach students historical research skills and methods and give them opportunities to bring history to life.

KJHS is a club-based program that focuses on Kentucky history through service, activities, competition and opportunities for leadership. Students develop the understanding and tools that will enable them to become advocates for history and preservation in their own communities. All who join receive a membership card that entitles them to free admission to all historic sites in the Kentucky State Parks system; they can participate in KJHS-sponsored events around the state, including field trips to historic sites in the fall and the Kentucky Junior Historians Conference in the spring. They also can hone their leadership skills by running for a position on the KJHS student board.

"I've been in KJHS for eight years and am now the board president," said Ariel Young, a Metcalfe County High School senior. "The program has not only helped me to be a more

successful student, it has given me the kind of leadership skills and love for history that will have a lasting impact."

Students also may participate in Kentucky's National History Day (KNHD), an academic competition for grades 4-12. This year, KNHD will begin a special youth division for 4th- and 5th-grade students.

In groups or individually, students research a topic around an annual theme while learning the skills and techniques of a historian. This year's theme is "Innovation in History: Impact and Change." Engaging all kinds of learners, students then create projects in one of five categories: performance, documentary, paper, exhibit or Web site. While KJHS is focused solely on Kentucky history, KNHD students may choose topics pertaining to Kentucky, American or world history.

Kentucky's National History Day "...fits



Photo courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society

Students stop by a "Hands-on-History" cart during Kentucky's National History Day 2008 competition.

perfectly into Kentucky's core content and offers teachers the opportunity to teach beyond books and videos. KNHD allows real world learning and research to occur in Kentucky's classrooms," said Melissa Singleton, a teacher at Rockcastle County Middle School.

Eight district competitions occur across the

state in March and April, and those advancing from that level will compete at the state contest in May with the opportunity to go on to a national competition. Contest winners and their teachers are eligible to win scholarships, special awards and prizes at all levels of Kentucky's National History Day contest.

New for the 2009-10 school year, Kentucky's National History Day participants at all levels also may attend the Kentucky Junior Historians Conference on May 7-8, 2010, where KNHD and KJHS participants have the chance to showcase their talent and hard work, elect officers to the KJHS student board and participate in competitions (including a quick recall tournament), workshops and other activities. The KNHD state contest will be integrated into this event on Saturday, May 8.

A flat fee of \$10 per student includes KJHS membership and covers all KNHD contest fees (district and state) as well as the Kentucky Junior Historians Conference fee.

MORE INFO...

www.history.ky.gov

Tim Talbott, tim.talbott@ky.gov,
502-564-1792